

RIPPLE ENGLISH

ACTIVE LEARNING PROGRAM

Workbook for:

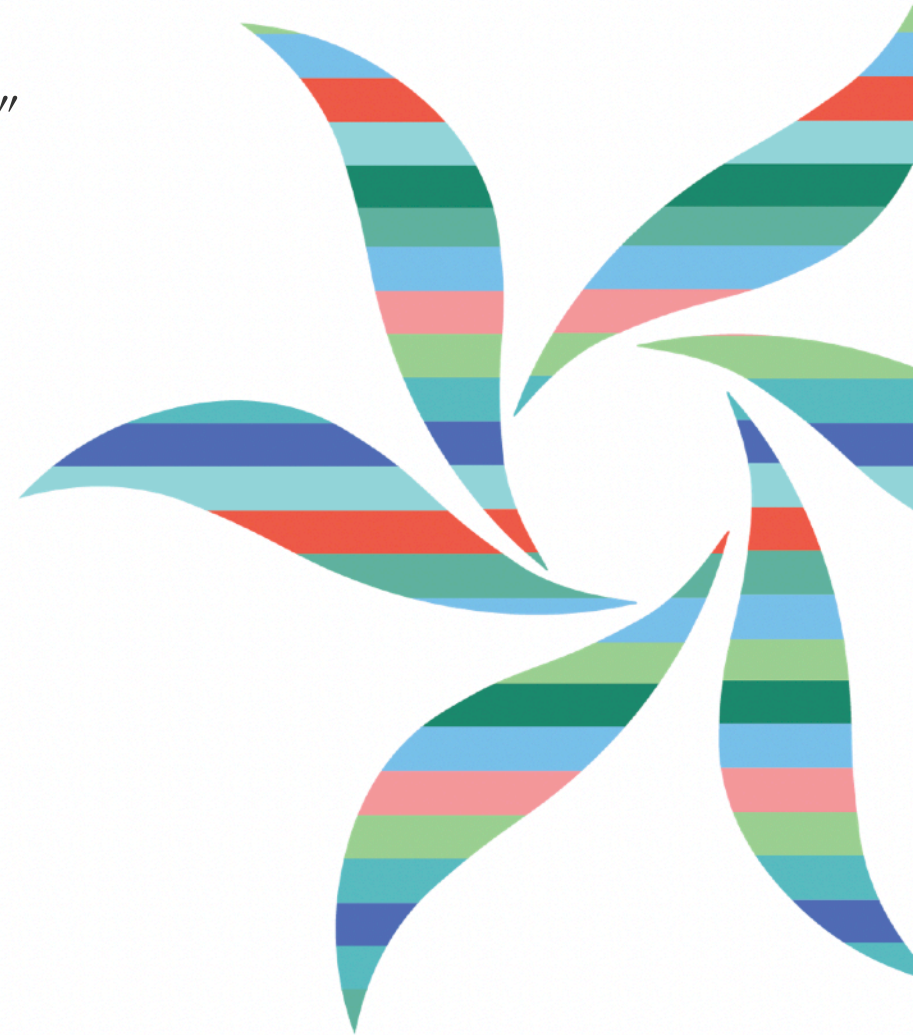
“Cultural Boundary in Business: Japan & The US”

問題は解きっぱなしにしないで！

英語資格試験の学習は、**解いた後の復習をしなければほとんど効果はありません。**

答え合わせをしておしまいせず、**テキストの音読練習やリスニング、多読学習などのインプット学習を何度も反復して記憶に定着させましょう。**ホームページからダウンロードできる音読練習用のテキストをぜひご活用ください。

また、数日置いてから再度解き直すのも効果的です。答えを記憶してしまっているかもしれませんが、**回答の根拠をなぞりながら繰り返し解くことで有効な復習になります！**



Cultural Boundary in Business: Japan & The US

1. Today, whether you work in New York or Tokyo, we are all part of a global community, and working with people from other countries is becoming increasingly familiar to us. Of course, language skills are necessary, but those alone aren't enough. For example, when it comes to working with people from the United States, having good English skills is certainly essential, but we also need to learn the cultural differences between Americans and Japanese. The culture in which we grow up has a profound impact on how we see the world. In any given culture, members are subconsciously **conditioned** from birth to understand the world in a particular way, to see certain communication patterns as effective or undesirable, and to consider certain ways of making decisions “natural” or “strange.” Of course, every individual is different and we should not stereotype others based on where they come from. However, we should have humility to recognize the influence of cultural factors over our behaviors as well as respect for individual differences. Both are important.
 2. What do you think makes a good communicator in business? Well, the definition varies significantly from culture to culture. In Anglo-Saxon cultures including the United States, people are subconsciously trained to communicate as literally and explicitly as possible, while in many Asian cultures, they often believe good communication is implicit, subtle, and **nuanced**.
 3. These contrasting styles of communication are often referred to as low-context and high-context, respectively. Low-context cultures like the US assume that there is very little shared knowledge, so messages have to be precise and clear in order to avoid misunderstandings. Conversely, communication in high-context cultures like Japan is based on the assumption that they share a lot of common understanding and knowledge. Communication is often implicit to save time and maintain relationships. For example, a question like “Can you complete this project by next week?” may bring ambiguous answers: “It will be very difficult, but I’ll do my best,” “We’ll think about it.” Low-context communicators may take them as “yes”, but they virtually mean “no.”
- (1) The word “conditioned” in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - A. trained
 - B. punished
 - C. constrained
 - D. restricted
 - (2) What is the main point paragraph 1 is trying to convey?
 - A. Language skills are the only necessary factor when working with people from other countries.
 - B. Understanding cultural differences is an important factor when working with people from other countries.
 - C. Cultural factors do not influence our behaviors.
 - D. We should stereotype others based on where they come from.
 - (3) Which of the following best describes the meaning of the word “nuanced”?
 - A. characterized by a one-dimensional or oversimplified view of meaning or expression.
 - B. characterized by extreme or obvious differences in meaning or expression.
 - C. characterized by a lack of depth or complexity in meaning or expression.
 - D. characterized by subtle shades of meaning or expression.
 - (4) According to paragraph 3, Americans usually talk explicitly because
 - A. they assume they are not smart enough to guess what’s implied.
 - B. they assume they have very few common understandings.
 - C. they will be exploited unless they explicitly refuse.
 - D. they don’t have to care about maintaining relationships.

4. Another cause of conflicts in international business is the difference in decision-making processes. For example, Americans usually prefer a top-down approach in which generally the person in charge makes decisions quickly on behalf of the entire group. Rejecting the need for group agreement, the American boss says to the group, “This is what we are going to do,” and most members of the team fall in line, regardless of their own opinions. By contrast, a majority of Japanese companies belong to consensus culture where the decision making takes quite a long time, since everyone is consulted. In typical Japanese companies, consensus building starts with informal, face-to-face discussions. This process of informally making a proposal and gaining support is called “root-binding” or in Japanese “nemawashi.” With a longer, consensus-based decision-making process, implementation is quicker since everyone is aware of the decision, most people agree with it, and the decision is fixed and inflexible. On the other hand, Americans often believe that a decision is just a temporary agreement to continue discussion and it can always be changed to respond flexibly to **variable** situations.
5. Japan and the United States ended up having different conceptions of what it means to be a good communicator in business. Such differences often come from the history of each country. Since Japan is an island society, in most of its history, it has been closed off from the rest of the world and the population grew to be homogenous. During its thousands of years of shared history, Japanese people have generated layers of shared context to become particularly skilled at picking up each other’s messages in order to communicate smoothly, maintain relationships, and preserve harmony within the community. By contrast, the United States has been shaped by enormous inflows of immigrants from all over the world within the last 250 years, all with different histories, languages, and cultural backgrounds. Because they had very little shared context, Americans soon had to realize that they needed to make their messages as explicit and clear as possible, with little room for ambiguity and misunderstanding.

- (5) The word “variable” in the passage is closest in meaning to
- A. stable
 - B. unpredictable
 - C. changeable
 - D. consistent

(6) According to paragraph 4, what is the main difference in decision-making processes between Americans and Japanese companies?

- A. American companies consult everyone before making a decision while Japanese companies make top-down decisions.
- B. Japanese companies make decisions quickly on behalf of the entire group, and American companies do otherwise.
- C. American companies prefer a top-down approach while Japanese companies belong to consensus culture.
- D. Unlike American companies, Japanese companies do not have a formal process of decision-making.

(6) Which of the following text best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence?

Genetic code functions quite similarly.

- A. Both cells and computers exchange electrical signals for communication.
- B. Just like computers require 8 digits to express a single letter we can comprehend, genome requires 3 digits to express one piece of information.
- C. Just like a single letter in computer consists of 8-digit binary code, a protein consists of 20 kinds of amino acids.
- D. Both lives and digital devices encrypt its information for security purpose

6. **The fact that the USA became one of the lowest-context cultures in the world implies what we need in cross cultural collaboration.** Due to the increasing globalization, we have a growing opportunity to work with people with different backgrounds. We need to develop a skill to switch from high context to low context communication as necessary; otherwise, the messages they receive might be different from the messages you meant.
7. If you work with people from different cultural backgrounds, you will encounter significant differences in many aspects, such as what it means to be late, how they build trust, and the manner of providing feedback. We often make the mistake of assuming that all differences, conflicts, and misunderstandings are rooted in the individual's personality, when they are usually the product of cultural differences. For example, the Japanese consensual decision-making process is quite different from the American top-down approach. Yet, the way we are conditioned to make decisions in our own culture seems so obvious and natural that it is difficult to imagine that another culture might do it differently. Trapped in our own cultural bias, we often end up thinking that their way is wrong and inefficient.
8. However, both consensual and top-down decision-making processes can be effective under specific conditions. Each country has developed the most suitable culture for its own environment. In order to collaborate effectively, we first need to be aware of how culture impacts us. Then, talk about the cultural differences that influence your style. We can avoid problems by explaining and understanding what seems natural and comfortable to each side. Working in a diverse community is challenging, but it is also a remarkable experience full of endless surprises and discoveries.

(7) Which of the following text best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence?

The fact that the USA became one of the lowest-context cultures in the world implies what we need in cross cultural collaboration.

- A. When the group includes people from various backgrounds, communication has to be complex and nuanced.
- B. When the group consists of homogenous population, communication has to be explicit and direct.
- C. When the group includes people from various backgrounds, communication has to be precise and clear.
- D. When the group consists of homogenous population, communication has to be ambiguous and subtle.
- (8) What is the main idea of paragraph 7?
- A. Individuals from different cultural backgrounds are inherently different from one another.
- B. All conflicts in cross-cultural communication arise from differences in personalities.
- C. There are significant cultural differences in many aspects of communication, and we should be aware of them to avoid misunderstandings.
- D. The Japanese consensual decision-making process is inefficient compared to the American top-down approach.
- (9) According to paragraph 8, which of the following is true?
- A. Consensual decision making turned out to be inefficient in the 21st Century.
- B. We need to openly explain the style each of us inherited from their culture.
- C. Working in a diverse community is so challenging that you should avoid it.
- D. Top-down decision making is usually the most effective approach.
- (10) Within the whole passage, all of the following were mentioned, EXCEPT
- A. Cultures vary in their concept of punctuality.
- B. What they mean by a decision can be different from culture to culture.
- C. A culture is often a product of its own history.
- D. High-context manner of speech is required in a diverse community.

- (1) A
- (2) B
- (3) D
- (4) B
- (5) C
- (6) C
- (7) C
- (8) C
- (9) B
- (10) D

(1) 文中の“conditioned”に意味が最も近いのは

- A. trained (訓練される)
- B. punished (罰せられる)
- C. constrained (強いられる)
- D. restricted (制限される)

文脈次第ではCDも正解になりえるが、「生まれたときから無意識にconditionされる」という文脈で来ているのでAが最も近い意味となる。

(2) 1 段落の要点は？

- A. Language skills are the only necessary factor when working with people from other countries. (言語スキルは他国の人と働くときに唯一必要なスキルだ)
- B. Understanding cultural differences is an important factor when working with people from other countries. (他国の人々と仕事をする場合、文化的な違いを理解することが重要な要因である。)**
- C. Cultural factors do not influence our behaviors. (文化的な要因は私たちの行動に影響を与えない。)
- D. We should stereotype others based on where they come from. (出身地に基づいて他人をステレオタイプ化する必要がある。)

(3) 文中の“nuanced”の意味を最も的確に表しているのは？

- A. characterized by a one-dimensional or oversimplified view of meaning or expression. (意味・表現の一面的あるいは極度に単純化された見方を表す)
- B. characterized by extreme or obvious differences in meaning or expression. (意味・表現の極めて明確な違いを伴う)
- C. characterized by a lack of depth or complexity in meaning or expression. (意味・表現における深みや複雑さを欠いている)
- D. characterized by subtle shades of meaning or expression. (意味・表現のわずかで繊細な違いを表す)**

(4) 3 段落によると、アメリカ人がしばしば明確に話す理由は

- A. they assume they are not smart enough to guess what's implied. (ほのめかされていることを推測できるほど賢くないという想定をしているから)
- B. they assume they have very few common understandings. (共有された理解が非常に少ないことを想定しているから)**
- C. they will be exploited unless they explicitly refuse. (明確に断らないと付け入られるから)
- D. they don't have to care about maintaining relationships. (関係性の維持を気にかける必要がないから)

(5) 文中の“variable”と意味が最も近いのは

- A. stable (安定した)
- B. unpredictable (予測し難い)
- C. changeable (変わりやすい)**
- D. consistent (一貫した)

(6) 4段落によると、アメリカと日本の企業の意思決定プロセスの主要な違いは？

- A. American companies consult everyone before making a decision while Japanese companies make top-down decisions. (アメリカ企業は意思決定の前に全員に相談し、日本はトップダウンで意思決定する)
- B. Japanese companies make decisions quickly on behalf of the entire group, and American companies do otherwise. (日本企業は集団を代表して素早く意思決定するが、アメリカ企業はその逆だ)**

C. American companies prefer a top-down approach while Japanese companies belong to consensus culture. (アメリカ企業はトップダウンの方法を好み、一方で日本企業は合意形成文化だ)

D. Unlike American companies, Japanese companies do not have a formal process of decision-making. (アメリカ企業と異なり、日本企業は公式のプロセスを踏まない)

(7) 傍線部の文章がもっとも伝えたい情報は？

The fact that the USA became one of the lowest-context cultures in the world implies what we need in cross cultural collaboration.

- A. When the group includes people from various backgrounds, communication has to be complex and nuanced. (集団が異なる文化背景の人たちを含む場合、意思伝達は複雑で繊細なニュアンスの違いを含むものである必要がある)
- B. When the group consists of homogenous population, communication has to be explicit and direct. (集団の構成員が均一な場合、意思伝達は明確で直接的である必要がある)
- C. When the group includes people from various backgrounds, communication has to be precise and clear. (集団が異なる文化背景の人たちを含む場合、意思伝達は正確かつ明確である必要がある)**
- D. When the group consists of homogenous population, communication has to be ambiguous and subtle. (集団の構成員が均一な場合、意思伝達は曖昧かつ繊細である必要がある)

多文化社会のアメリカがローコンテキスト(明確かつ正確な)コミュニケーションの文化になったということは、異なる文化背景を持つ人達で構成される集団での意思疎通は明確かつ正確である必要があるということを示唆しているのでCが正解。

(8) 7 段落が伝えていることは？

- A. Individuals from different cultural backgrounds are inherently different from one another. (異なる文化背景を持つ個々人は生得的に異なっている)
- B. All conflicts in cross-cultural communication arise from differences in personalities. (異文化コミュニケーションにおけるあらゆる問題は個々人の性格の違いに根ざしている)
- C. There are significant cultural differences in many aspects of communication, and we should be aware of them to avoid misunderstandings. (コミュニケーションの様々な側面で文化の間に顕著な違いがあり、誤解を避けるためにはそうした違いを自覚する必要がある)**
- D. The Japanese consensual decision-making process is inefficient compared to the American top-down approach. (日本の合意形成を重んじる意思決定のプロセスはアメリカのトップダウンのやりかたより非効率だ)

(9) 8 段落の内容に合致するのは？

- A. Consensual decision making turned out to be inefficient in the 21st Century. (21世紀では合意形成アプローチは非効率)
- B. We need to openly explain the style each of us inherited from their culture. (文化から受けたスタイルの違いをお互いに説明する必要がある)**
- C. Working in a diverse community is so challenging that you should avoid it. (多様な環境で働くことは非常に大変なので避けるべきだ)
- D. Top-down decision making is usually the most effective approach. (トップダウンの意思決定は効果的であることが多い)

(10) 本文中で述べられていないのは

- A. Cultures vary in their concept of punctuality. (時間厳守の感覚は文化によって異なる)
- B. What they mean by a decision can be different from culture to culture. (決定の意味合いは文化によって異なる)
- C. A culture is often a product of its own history. (文化は歴史の産物であることが多い)
- D. High-context manner of speech is required in a diverse community. (多文化の環境ではハイコンテキストな話し方が求められる) ←逆。多文化コミュニティで求められるのは曖昧さを排したローコンテキストな会話。**